

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Barbara Crouch and I'm from Sprague.

I'm writing to you today to express my disappointment with Governor Lamont's proposed budget which reduces equitable funding especially for BIPOC families.

Given the difficult 24 months that our children, educators, and families have had, I hoped to see a demonstrated interest in ensuring our education system is finally able to meet the needs of our children. These last two years have been eye-opening for many of us, myself included. It's become very clear to me that if we don't find a way to fund our students equitably and immediately, their educational experiences will never improve.

I was fortunate enough that my two children...now seniors..had the privilege of attending parochial schools and having private tutors for public high school. Most of their friends did not have these opportunities.

Many districts were able to provide additional resources to help cope with the academic and emotional tolls that COVID-19 took on all of our children, teachers, and administrators by using federal COVID relief money. However, those funds will soon be exhausted and districts won't be able to maintain those services without additional funds.

Unfortunately, Governor Lamont's proposed budget doesn't address the importance of continuing to fund our students by fully funding the ECS and hinders school choice by reducing funding for charter schools. This would allow school districts to keep offering all the resources that federal ESSER funding allowed them to, and make the transition off of these funds significantly easier.

I am urging you to reject the governor's proposed budget as it stands and consider the needs of our children as you complete a revised budget. It is past time we put them at the forefront of the conversation.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Crouch